

HONORING BOOKS FOR AFRICA
FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the work of an internationally recognized nongovernmental organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota, that for the past 25 years has helped to transform the lives of millions of people—young and old—across the continent of Africa. With commitment and a passion for putting a book in the hands of children and elders hungry for knowledge, Books for Africa is an organization that has shipped more than 20 million books to more than 35 African countries since 1988. In so many African cities, towns and rural schools, where students had no access to books, there are now books for learning, enjoyment, and to experience the wonders of the world.

Mr. Tom Warth is the founder of Books for Africa and he is an inspirational humanitarian. Tom's vision, enthusiasm, and his ongoing commitment, along with the work of all the board of directors of Books for Africa, continues to transform lives by facilitating the shipment of container after container of books that put real books in the hands of real people.

Now, under the strong leadership of Mr. Pat Plonsky, I am proud to continue my office's ongoing relationship with Books for Africa. Their collaborations with Peace Corps volunteers, the State Department, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, enables the U.S. to demonstrate both its generosity and its willingness to provide a tangible learning tool. Last year, in partnership with USAID's Africa Education Initiative, 18 containers of books were delivered to Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. All told, Books for Africa delivered 119 containers of books in 2007 to 22 countries, a truly impressive accomplishment.

This form of public diplomacy—putting the book in the hands of a child or elder—is truly the best face of America and should not only be sustained, but expanded. In the U.S. we take books for granted, but we should never forget the power of a book. And, when they are distributed by the millions, the benefit cannot be overstated.

Let me conclude by also recognizing the extraordinary effort of the volunteers for Books for Africa, as well as the donations of high quality books from publishers, schools and organizations. This combined and coordinated effort is transforming lives. If this generosity and determination to provide books can continue to match the hunger for knowledge, learning, and education by the children and adults all across the African continent, then we will have even greater accomplishments to celebrate in the future.

Again, congratulations to Books for Africa for 25 years of extraordinary work to build a bridge of knowledge, education and hope between Minnesota and communities all across Africa.

IN MEMORY OF JAMES HERBERT
"JIMMIE RED" JONES

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a great Arkansas statesman MG (Ret.) James Herbert "Jimmie Red" Jones of Hot Springs, Arkansas, who passed away on September 1, 2008 at the age of 88. He was a former Arkansas State auditor and a former adjutant general of the Arkansas National Guard.

I will forever remember Jimmie Red Jones as one of Arkansas's finest. His life was one defined by honor, leadership, and service to the people of Arkansas for over 70 years.

Jimmie Red Jones graduated from Magnolia High School, Southern Arkansas University and Keegan's School of Radio and Television in Memphis. He attended Arkansas Law School and later received the Southern Arkansas University Distinguished Alumni Award in 1988.

Jimmie Red Jones joined the Arkansas National Guard in 1938, and by the time he left active service in 1945, he had received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters (which he particularly cherished), the Joint Service Medal, the European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal recognition with five Bronze Stars, and the World War II Victory Medal—along with many others. He later rejoined the National Guard in 1947 and remained with the Guard until his promotion to adjutant general in 1979, earning the Legion of Merit and the Armed Forces Reserve Medals.

Jimmie Red Jones returned to Magnolia after the war and sought to serve his community. He organized the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW, and Chamber of Commerce in Magnolia. Governor Francis Cherry appointed him as State land commissioner in 1955 and he was named Magnolia Man of the Year that same year.

He was also elected State auditor in 1956 and served 12 terms. He would later serve as adjutant general of the Arkansas National Guard from 1979 to 1981 and then from 1983 to 1984.

I will especially always remember the many miles and countless hours that I spent with Jimmie Red Jones on the campaign trail while he pursued his active interest in politics serving as state campaign manager for Bill Clinton's 1982 gubernatorial campaign.

Jimmie Red Jones will be forever remembered in Arkansas as an inspiring example of selfless service to state and country. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife, Shirley Ledbetter Jones, Colonel (Ret.); stepsons Bobby Dale Gentry of Pine Bluff, Barry Gentry of Redfield and Chan Holcombe of Fort Smith; his six grand-step-children and his niece and nephew. Jimmie Red Jones will be greatly missed in Arkansas and we are all truly saddened by this loss.

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-
TIVES ON THE DEATH OF THE
HONORABLE STEPHANIE TUBBS
JONES, A REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE STATE OF OHIO

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 8, 2008

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincere condolences for the passing of the Honorable STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES.

Not only was she a true hero and noble leader in the United States Congress, a trail-blazer for all minorities, but she was also a friend who will be dearly missed.

Representative STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES' passing is a tragic loss for this Congress and our Nation. Her leadership on the ethics committee and on voting rights will never be forgotten. On behalf of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, we send our prayers and condolences to her family, friends and staff.

As Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I worked with Representative JONES together on a variety of projects, including our fundraising efforts for Gallaudet University here in Washington, as well as other endeavors which promoted advocacy for low-income and minority communities.

Having been blessed with the opportunity to get to know her outside the walls of Congress as a team member of the Democratic Congressional Basketball Team, I was impressed by her continually cheerful disposition and lively energy. Due to this vigor, she was always able to spread joy to others and add a positive light no matter the situation.

STEPHANIE's death will be felt by all, not just within Cleveland community, but also throughout the Nation because of the ideals she stood for. I offer the thoughts and prayers of my wife Barbara and myself to Congresswoman STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES' son Mervyn and for her family for their loss.

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-
TIVES ON THE DEATH OF THE
HONORABLE STEPHANIE TUBBS
JONES, A REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE STATE OF OHIO

SPEECH OF

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 8, 2008

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my most sincere condolences on the death of the Honorable STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES.

I was extremely saddened to hear the news of Congresswoman JONES' passing. Since 1999, she has proudly and honorably served Ohio's eleventh district.

STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES was the daughter of an Airport skycap. She grew up in Cleveland and graduated from college and law school at Case Western. She began her life of public service when she went to work as a local government lawyer and went on to serve

8 years as a judge on the Court of Common Pleas of Cuyahoga County. As the first African American woman elected from Ohio to serve in Congress, she brought a fresh energy and new perspective to the House. No one was surprised when she quickly rose to a position on the powerful Ways and Means Committee.

I got to know STEPHANIE in my first term in Congress because my office was next door to hers. She was never too busy to help a freshman member in whatever way she could. Her energy was boundless, and I will sorely miss her smile—it could light up a crowded room. Those who had the good fortune to know this incredible woman know what I am talking about.

During her four terms in Congress, she was a champion for the people of the eleventh district. She worked tirelessly to create equal opportunities for all people in this country as she fought to increase the minimum wage, to increase funding to public schools, and to create affordable and accessible healthcare.

The people of Ohio have lost a great political leader, and we have lost a beloved and respected colleague. We will all miss her friendly smile and her passion for her fellow man.

CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL:
VIRGINIA LEADS THE WAY

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, the years 2011 through 2015 will mark the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War, a momentous milestone for our nation that provides an exceptional opportunity to examine the war, its causes and its legacies. The sesquicentennial commemoration of the American Civil War needs to involve full participation at the local, State and Federal levels. However, as there are currently no Federal plans for the sesquicentennial, the states have stepped in to take the lead in planning for this watershed event. I am proud to announce that Virginia leads the nation in being the first to establish a sesquicentennial commission that is planning events and activities that offer a fair and balanced depiction of Civil War history that includes all perspectives. I am pleased to support the work of the Commission and endorse its plans.

Virginia was the epicenter of the Civil War in the 1860s and continues to be a central location in terms of what visitors can see and experience today. Virginia has more Civil War battlefields, museums and historic sites than any other state, including the historic site of the first land battle of the Civil War at Manassas that is located in the 10th Congressional District, which I represent. Too often when we study history, we tend to think that battles were neatly fought within the split-rail fenced boundaries. In truth, most of Virginia was a battleground during the Civil War.

CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

The Virginia General Assembly created the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission in 2006 for the purpose of preparing for and commemorating the sesquicentennial of Virginia's participation in the American Civil War. Speaker of the House of

Delegates William Howell chairs the Commission, whose other members include President Pro Tempore of the Senate Chuck Colgan, members of the House of Delegates and Senate of Virginia, citizens, and the renowned Civil War historian Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson, Jr., of Virginia Tech. It is important to recall that Dr. Robertson was selected by President Kennedy to serve as executive director of the Federal Centennial Commission 50 years ago.

The Commission is charged with:

Planning commemorative programs and activities that are designed to involve all citizens and result in a positive legacy and long-term public benefit,

Encouraging civic, historical, educational, economic, and other organizations throughout Virginia to organize and participate in activities to expand the understanding and appreciation of the significance of the American Civil War, and

Providing technical assistance to localities and nonprofit organizations to further the commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.

The Commission has established the following goals to guide the commemoration that are reflective of values that are important to Americans today:

Diversity: The commemoration will be inclusive of and meaningful to all Virginians, particularly: diverse racial and ethnic groups, citizens who are new to this country and those who do not have a hereditary link to the American Civil War, and young people and others seeking to understand the relevance of the American Civil War to today's society.

Inclusiveness: The commemoration will seek to portray a fair and balanced story of Virginia's participation in the American Civil War that includes African-American, Union, and Confederate perspectives.

Statewide Accessibility: The commemoration will be statewide, involving all localities and encompassing all Civil War-related institutions, museums, battlefields, parks, and facilities.

Education: The commemoration will include a strong education component designed to ignite a renewed interest in Virginia's historical heritage. Opportunities will be provided to re-examine the lessons of the past and the legacies of the Civil War to understand how they affect the present and continue to shape our future.

Permanence: The commemoration will imprint Virginia history and leave a positive and rich legacy well beyond 2015.

The Commission has begun to develop plans for how to recognize the magnitude of this occasion. The Commission has adopted a vision statement that will guide the commemoration period, "Understanding Our Past, Embracing Our Future," launched a Web site that is receiving national and international attention (www.VirginiaCivilWar.org), and is developing a comprehensive array of initiatives, including:

Statewide coordination: Linking, coordinating, and promoting the hundreds of Civil War museums and sites throughout the state.

Museum exhibitions: Partnering with the Virginia Historical Society to develop a major exhibition, "An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia," as well as the Civil War 150 HistoryMobile, a mobile museum vehicle that will be capable of traveling throughout the nation to bring these important stories directly to the people.

Legacy Project: Document Digitization: Using the sesquicentennial as an opportunity to preserve and provide access to unknown diaries, journals, letters, and other documents that are in private hands, the Library of Virginia will lead a major initiative to identify, catalog, and preserve those documents through digitization and web access. Locating and uncovering this material will provide a boon to Civil War research for years to come.

Signature events: Signature events begin in 2009 with a conference on the coming of the Civil War at the University of Richmond, and a joint commemorative event with the State of West Virginia, planned in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of John Brown's raid on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry. High profile events are planned for the duration of the commemoration to mark important milestones, such as a national event at Manassas in 2011 to mark the 150th anniversary of the first land battle of the war and to set the tone for the sesquicentennial.

I would like to commend the leadership role that the Commonwealth has taken and recognize the work of the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission and urge others to join with them to participate in this commemorating this special occasion.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SUSPENSION OF FEDERAL INCOME TAX ON UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ACT OF 2008

HON. JOHN M. MCHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation, the Suspension of Federal Income Tax on Unemployment Benefits Act of 2008, which is designed to help unemployed Americans as they face increasing living costs and a sluggish economy. Specifically, the bill would suspend the federal income tax on unemployment compensation benefits for two years.

As of August 2008, 9.4 million Americans were unemployed, an increase of 2.2 million from just a year ago. Similarly, the unemployment rate has risen from 4.7 percent to 6.1 percent. Closer to home, as of the end of July, in New York State 522,000 people were unemployed, including 26,200 in the 23rd Congressional District, which I have the privilege of representing. Additionally, six of the 11 counties I represent had unemployment numbers that exceeded the national rate.

On September 4, 2008, the U.S. Department of Labor announced that initial unemployment insurance claims had increased 15,000 to 444,000 and that approximately 3.44 million Americans are now receiving unemployment compensation benefits, which currently average \$294 a week. However, these benefits have been significantly eroded by substantial increases in the prices for consumer goods, perhaps most notably, food and energy.

Many fail to realize that Americans must pay federal income taxes on any unemployment compensation benefits they might receive. However, prior to 1979, those payments were excluded from federal income taxation and it was not until 1986 that Congress made such benefits fully taxable.